

APPENDIX

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AMERICAN DENTAL ASSOCIATION PRINCIPLES OF ETHICS

Section 1—*Education Beyond the Usual Level*—The right of a dentist to professional status rests in the knowledge, skill, and experience with which he serves his patients and society. Every dentist has the obligation of keeping his knowledge and skill freshened by continuing education through all of his professional life.

Section 2—*Service to the Public*—The dentist's primary duty of serving the public is discharged by giving the highest type of service of which he is capable and by avoiding any conduct which leads to a lowering of esteem of the profession of which he is a member.

In serving the public, a dentist may exercise reasonable discretion in selecting patients for his practice. However, a dentist may not refuse to accept a patient into his practice or deny dental service to a patient solely because of the patient's race, creed, color, or national origin.

Section 3—*Government of a Profession*—Every profession receives from society the right to regulate itself, to determine and judge its own members. Such regulation is achieved largely through the influence of the professional societies, and every dentist has the dual obligation of making himself a part of a professional society and of observing its rules of ethics.

Section 4—*Leadership*—The dentist has the obligation of providing freely of his skills, knowledge, and experience to society in those fields in which his qualifications entitle him to speak with professional competence. The

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dentist should be a leader in his community, including all efforts leading to the improvement of the dental health of the public.

Section 5—*Emergency Service*—The dentist has an obligation when consulted in an emergency by the patient of another dentist to attend to the conditions leading to the emergency and to refer the patient to his regular dentist who should be informed of the conditions found and treated.

Section 6—*Use of Auxiliary Personnel*—The dentist has an obligation to protect the health of his patient by not delegating to a person less qualified any service or operation which requires the professional competence of a dentist. The dentist has a further obligation of prescribing and supervising the work of all auxiliary personnel in the interests of rendering the best service to the patient.

Section 7—*Consultation*—The dentist has the obligation of seeking consultation whenever the welfare of the patient will be safeguarded or advanced by having recourse to those who have special skills, knowledge, and experience. A consultant will hold the details of a consultation in confidence and will not undertake treatment without the consent of the attending practitioner.

Section 8.—*Justifiable Criticism and Expert Testimony*—The dentist has an obligation to report to the appropriate agency of his component or constituent dental society instances of gross and continual faulty treatment by another dentist. If there is evidence of faulty treatment, the welfare of the patient demands that corrective treatment be instituted. The dentist may provide expert testimony when that testimony is essential to a just and fair disposition of a judicial or administrative action. A dentist has the obligation to refrain from commenting disparagingly, without justification, about the services of another dentist.

Section 9—*Rebates and Split Fees*—The dentist may not accept or tender “rebates” or “split fees.”

Section 10—*Secret Agents and Exclusive Methods*—The dentist has an obligation not to prescribe, dispense, or promote the use of drugs or other agents whose complete formulas are not available to the dental profession. He also has the obligation not to prescribe or dispense, except for limited investigative purposes, any therapeutic agent, the value of which is not supported by scientific evidence. The dentist has the further obligation of not holding out as exclusive, any agent, method, or technique.

Section 11—*Patents and Copyrights*—The dentist has the obligation of making the fruits of his discoveries and labors available to all when they are useful in safeguarding or promoting the health of the public. Patents and copyrights may be secured by a dentist provided that they and the remuneration derived from them are not used to restrict research, practice, or the benefits of the patented or copyrighted material.

Section 12—*Advertising*—Advertising reflects adversely on the dentist who employs it and lowers the public esteem of the dental profession. The dentist has the obligation of advancing his reputation for fidelity, judgment, and skill solely through his professional services to his patients and to society. The use of advertising in any form to solicit patients is inconsistent with this obligation.

Section 13—*Cards, Letterheads, and Announcements*—A dentist may properly utilize professional cards, announcement cards, recall notices to patients of record, and letterheads when the style and text are consistent with the dignity of the profession and with the custom of other dentists in the community.

Announcement cards may be sent when there is a change in location or an alteration in the character of practice, but only to other dentists, to members of other health professions, and to patients of record.

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Section 14—Office Door Lettering and Signs—A dentist may properly utilize office door lettering and signs provided that their style and the text are consistent with the dignity of the profession and with the custom of other dentists in the community.

Section 15—Use of Professional Titles and Degrees—A dentist may use the titles or degrees Doctor, Dentist, D.D.S., or D.M.D., in connection with his name on cards, letterheads, office door signs, and announcements. A dentist who also possesses a medical degree may use this degree in addition to his dental degree in connection with his name on cards, letterheads, office door signs, and announcements. A dentist who has been certified by a national certifying board for one of the specialties approved by the American Dental Association may use the title "Diplomate" in connection with his specialty on his cards, letterheads, and announcements if such usage is consistent with the custom of dentists in the community. A dentist may not use his title or degree in connection with the promotion of any commercial endeavor.

The use of eponyms in connection with drugs, agents, instruments, or appliances is generally to be discouraged.

Section 16—Health Education of the Public—A dentist may properly participate in a program of health education of the public involving such media as the press, radio, television, and lecture, provided that such programs are in keeping with the dignity of the profession and the custom of the dental profession of the community.

Section 17—Contract Practice—A dentist may enter into an agreement with individuals and organizations to provide dental health care provided that the agreement does not permit or compel practices which are in violation of these *Principles of Ethics*.

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Section 18—*Announcement of Limitation of Practice*—

Only a dentist who limits his practice exclusively to the special areas approved by the American Dental Association for limited practice may include a statement of his limitation in announcements, cards, letterheads, and directory listings (consistent with the customs of dentists of the community), provided at the time of the announcement, he has met in each specialty for which he announces the existing educational requirements and standards set by the American Dental Association for members wishing to announce limitation of practice.

In accord with established ethical ruling that dentists should not claim or imply superiority, use of the phrases "Specialist in . . ." "Specialist on . . ." in announcements, cards, letterheads, or directory listings should be discouraged. The use of the phrase "Practice limited to . . ." is preferable.

A dentist who uses his eligibility to announce himself as a specialist to make the public believe that specialty services rendered in his dental office are being rendered by ethically qualified specialists when such is not the case is engaged in unethical conduct. The burden is on the specialist to avoid any inference that general practitioners who are associated with him are ethically qualified to announce themselves as specialists.

Section 19—*Directories*—A dentist may permit the listing of his name in a directory provided that all dentists in similar circumstances have access to a similar listing and provided that such listing is consistent in style and text with the custom of the dentists in the community.

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Section 20—*Name of Practice*—The name under which a dentist conducts his practice may be a factor in the selection process of the patient. The use of a trade name or an assumed name could mislead laymen concerning the identity, responsibility and status of those practicing thereunder. Accordingly, a dentist shall practice only under his own name, the name of a dentist employing him who practices in the same office, a partnership name composed only of the name of one or more of the dentists practicing in a partnership in the same office or a corporate name composed only of the name of one or more of the dentists practicing as employees of the corporation in the same office.

Use of the name of a dentist no longer actively associated with the practice may be continued for a period not to exceed one year.

The use of dentists' names in directories is covered entirely by Section 19.

Section 21—*Corporate Designations*—Corporate designations may be used.

Section 22—*Judicial Procedure*—Problems involving questions of ethics should be solved at the local level within the broad boundaries established in these *Principles of Ethics* and within the interpretation of the code of ethics of the component society. If a satisfactory decision cannot be reached, the question should be referred, on appeal, to the constituent society and the Council on Judicial Procedures, Constitution and Bylaws of the American Dental Association, as provided in Chapter XI of the *Bylaws* of the American Dental Association.

